

GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME

former Stephenson / France house

ADDRESS

1752 Waipahi Highway, Arthurton/Waipahi

PHOTOGRAPH



(October 2021)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.
(at time of assessment)

n / a

HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY

n / a

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Lot 1 DP 10765

GDC FILE NUMBER

3027089

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

later 1870s

**ARCHITECT / DESIGNER /
BUILDER**

William Stephenson, owner/builder

STYLE

Vernacular villa

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with offset L-shaped footprint and gabled roof forms. Principal, north-facing elevation has gabled bay at west end projecting forward of panelled door with fanlight. Double-hung sash windows; corbelled chimneys. Weatherboard addition at rear has gabled roof and is linked to main house by a lean-to porch at the south-east corner.

MATERIALS / STRUCTURE

Coursed random rubble stone, timber, brick, corrugated metal roofing.

ADDITIONS / ALTERATIONS

Timber extension at rear (c.1938/39). Reroofed (2021).

SETTING

The house stands on an elevated site within a rural property on the south side of Waipahi Highway; it is opposite Landslip Road and west of Otaria Road, which delineate the regional boundary between Southland and Otago. The scheduled setting is limited to the immediate environs of the house, rather than the land parcel as a whole.

HISTORY

The land on which the subject building stands was part of a 200-acre farm block held by William Stephenson by 1877. It appears that Stephenson leased the farm at first, with title being issued in his name in 1887. The block was bisected by a road (now SH 1) and bordered to the north by the railway line. Stephenson (c.1846-1909) was a Yorkshire-born stonemason and bricklayer by trade and he was advertising his services to build chimneys and baking ovens by 1880. Stephenson was elected unopposed to the Tutarau Road Board in 1887 and was secretary to the Arthurton School Committee ten years later. He had three children by his first marriage to Isabella Howard (c.1842-96) and was survived by his second wife. In 1902 Stephenson sold the farm to Robert Erskine France (died 1913) and subsequently moved to Gore, where he worked as a bricklayer once more. France transferred the farm to Robert Norman France (died 1954) in 1909. The property was still in France family ownership when it was subdivided to its current extent in 1963. The house has since passed through other hands and remains in private residential use.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has historic and social significance for its association with William Stephenson and his family, as well as the France family and the settlement of Arthurton on the eastern edge of Southland.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early occupants.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has architectural significance as a well-preserved colonial dwelling that takes the form of a simplified villa and was presumably designed by its owner/builder.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has technological and craftsmanship significance as a late 19th century stone masonry dwelling, built by its first owner who was a trained stonemason and bricklayer. Historically, as is the case today, builder's houses were typically built to a high standard in order to convey the competencies others could expect if they were to engage the owner/builder.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of its rural setting. The house's elevated site means that it can be seen from the road.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the building pre-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological value relating to the colonial development of the Stephenson farm and, more generally, the settlement of Arthurton.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Stephenson / France house has overall heritage significance to Arthurton/Waipahi and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historic and social significance for its association with William Stephenson, the Stephenson and France families, and the colonial settlement of Arthurton. The former Stephenson / France house has cultural value as a

demonstration of the way of life of its early occupants and architectural significance as a well-preserved vernacular villa. The former Stephenson / France house has technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its stone masonry construction by William Stephenson and contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of its rural setting. The house's setting has potential archaeological value in view of the building's age.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 17 June 1887, p. 5; 26 February 1892, p. 3; 8 June 1897, p. 3; 17 February 1908, p. 3; 23 January 1909, p. 2; 8 February 1909, p. 4.
- *Southland Times* 17 January 1877, p. 3.
- *Clutha Leader* 27 August 1880, p. 4.
- *Otago Daily Times* 23 September 1880, p. 3; 2 September 1911, p. 10.

REPORT COMPLETED

13 May 2022

AUTHOR

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of scheduling, limited to immediate setting, former Stephenson/France house, 1752 Waipahi Highway, Arthurton/Waipahi.